

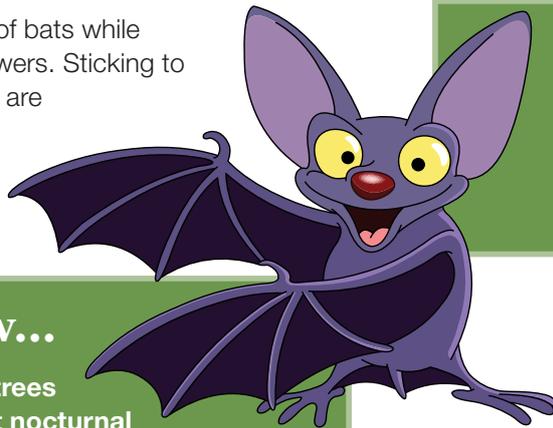
The night shift/ Seeing in the dark

We depend on forests for fresh air, food and to provide valuable timber. But did you know forests rely on flying-foxes?!

Forests are dependent on flying-foxes because they pollinate forest flowers and scatter seeds in their search for food.

Flying-foxes are nocturnal and have big eyes and good hearing which help them navigate their way over vast landscapes. They travel much further than day-feeding birds and bees. In one night, flying-foxes can travel up to distances of 100km in their search for food! Eucalypts, tea-trees, grevilleas, figs and lilly pillys are their favourite food. Flying-foxes will also forage in gardens, parks and orchards and have a choice of around 80 species of different plants to choose from. Using their big eyes and noses, flying-foxes see, smell and find food in the dark.

Pollen is collected on the fur of bats while they feed on the nectar of flowers. Sticking to the head and neck area, they are then able to pollinate many trees.



Baby grey-headed flying-foxes

Fact:

If bats cannot find native forests to live in they find other places to live and feed including patches of bushland in urban areas.

Did you know...

Many species of native trees flower at night to attract nocturnal feeders like flying-foxes. Some other tree species will only grow if their seeds are distributed far away from the parent tree through animals such as bats.



Bats also create new forests by dispersing seeds from the fruit they eat. They can spit the seeds out some distance away from the parent tree. They may also drop the seeds in flight or excrete small seeds while eating in the tree.

Know your facts:

Flying-foxes:

- have excellent vision and smell
- have more than 20 different calls used to defend their homes, fight over food and find their babies
- hang by their feet with their head down in tree branches (because it is energy efficient!)
- are very clean animals and constantly groom themselves
- are vegetarians eating fruit and flowers
- only have one baby a year